

## Franklin Historical Society October 2020

Fall. The air is crisper, the leaves turning, and the year that really wasn't is coming closer to an end promising hope for a much better, more "normal" 2021. Unfortunately, the meeting planned to recognize and celebrate the 100th anniversary of Mojalaki is being pushed to November. The renovation at the clubhouse, the only gathering venue large enough to accommodate the required social distancing and obviously the most appropriate, is, due to Covid 19, months behind schedule. Critical materials were seriously delayed, slowing progress to a crawl. The workmen are at least in the final phase, so there is room for optimism that the landmark event can still be acknowledged this calendar year.

The other happening about which there is usually conversation this time of the year, is the Christmas pot-luck dinner at Thompson Hall in December. I feel that to err on the side of caution and cancel is the best approach, but if any member has a different opinion or ideas how we might safely proceed, you are welcome to reply to this newsletter. All comments would be gratefully received, and all can be considered anonymous.

Although the investment portfolio currently reflects the recent roller-coaster effect of the Dow, slightly down from previous highs, the Society is in sound financial shape. The account's activity will continue to be monitored. Batteries were recently purchased for motion and smoke detectors, and the outside siren will be inspected to see if its batteries need replacement. The kitchen refrigerator, which kept ice cream and drinks cold that were for sale during the summer, has been turned off and defrosted. Next season's projects include more painting of porch and steps and porch columns. During the the next few weeks some areas of the basement foundation will be fortified against water intrusion with new mortar. Apart from those tasks, no new needs have arisen to warrant immediate action.

The last day of "open hours" occurred over Labor Day weekend, and on the final day, Monday, the Society entertained a total of more than twenty individuals with an illuminating tour of the museum displays. Masks were supplied to those who did not have one, sanitizer was made available, and distancing was maintained. One visitor, who came with his daughter, actually lived at the Orphans Home for a time, and was able to answer a question that had been posed since the original Orphans Home safe had been discovered in the waiting room of Lucky's Garage (previously Bill Hamel's). In what building of the Orphanage had this monster safe been? It turns out that in the corner of the museum's main exhibit room now exists storage cabinets that the Sisters had created (probably with Tat Sokul's help). That room had been an office, and where the cabinets are now, was the space filled by this enormous safe! So information is not the exclusive purview of the docent, as illumination can also come from the guests! Some visitors came off the trail and were from out of the area, but most encouragingly, a group came from the recovery center, something that has been discussed often with no tangible results, until now. The hope is next year more of the center's residents will wish to learn of the buildings' and area's heritage. The story can certainly be inspiring, and especially the story of the Orphans Home illustrates the best of human qualities in caring for those who need help the most with all funds coming from private sources.

Sincere thanks along with the acknowledgement of gifts and donations go this month to the **Meridian Lodge #60** for a generous cash donation; to the **Milford NH Historical Society** for the reverse painted portrait of Daniel Webster (see attached photo) which had been at their Society because of the Hutchinson family connection to Daniel ; to the **Gilmanton Historical Society** for two Webster Family (Caleb and Elizabeth Webster) bibles, with a recent booklet entitled "The Websters Since the Civil War", as well as a typed copy of the Hadley family genealogy (with no year of compilation but showing the effect of many years of wear) and two postal First Day Covers

from 1932 honoring Daniel Webster postmarked Salisbury, NH and Marshfield, MA.; to **Bonnie Feiock (from Indiana)** for scans of Franklin relatives of the 19th century and shedding light on the builder and first owner of 6 Terrace Place, her great grandfather Charles Streeter (see attached photo); to **Sheila Rainford** for two 8 mm film editors, which could definitely come in handy should items of this medium be donated in the future; **Ginger Gross** for a vintage complimentary bookmark advertising the Franklin Savings Bank; and **Barbara Wiegand Robinson** for an 8 x 10 of the 40th reunion of the FHS class of 1947 with numerous candid color snapshots of the event. A special thank you also goes to **Mike Mullavey** for donating a complete history of the Sturtevant Block and the Main Street Store in West Franklin, which will be added to the information already on hand from the 1988 historical district survey of that area. The Society also received, for which it gives its deepest thanks as well, from **Claude and Almena Bernier**, a large framed poster announcing the sale of the American Legion Arena (a large wooden amphitheater, located around the area of Daniell Park off Victory Drive, which in 1929 hosted a fight between Maxie Rosenbloom and Cuban Bobby Brown, so it was no smalltime boxing venue, and performances of the circus when it came to town) and a scan of Earl F. Leclair Sr., local featherweight champ and Almena's father (both items are now on display at the top of the staircase in the Tay section of the Society's museum) a photo is attached; and from a "friend of the Society", two boxes of latch needles, one from the Acme Knitting Machine and Needle Company (now Light and Power apartment complex on Memorial Street) and the other from the Franklin Needle Company (still standing on N. Main Street, but vacant for many years).

All of these contributions are deeply appreciated, as the Society continues to build as complete a history of Franklin as possible. It is people that make progress, so it is their stories that should be remembered and treasured as the pathway to the future.







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